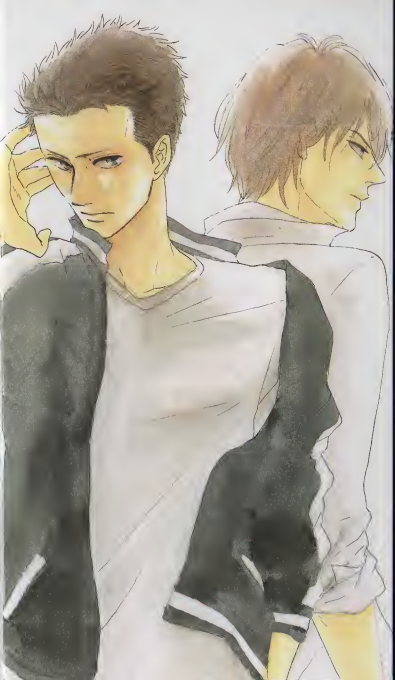

BE×BOY COMICS

# タッチ・ミー・アゲイン

TOUCH ME AGAIN TOUCH ME AGAIN TOUCH ME AGAIN TOUCH ME AGAIN TOUCH ME AGAIN

タッチ・ミー・アゲイン

／ヤマシタトモコ

BE×BOY COMICS

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Libre

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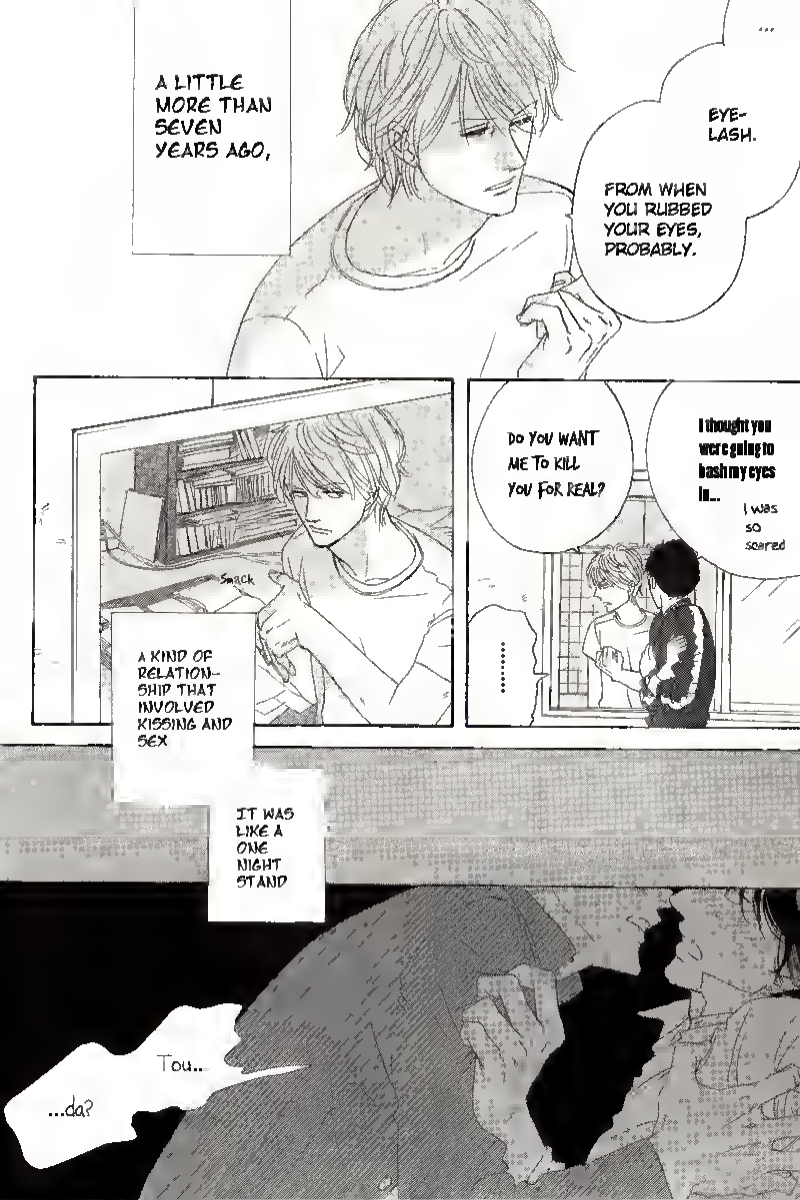
Seven years ago, Touda and Oshikiri crossed the friendship line once. Right after that incident however, they chose to pretend nothing had happened just so they could go on being best friends. But life is never so simple and seven years later, they begin to see the strains in their relationship show.

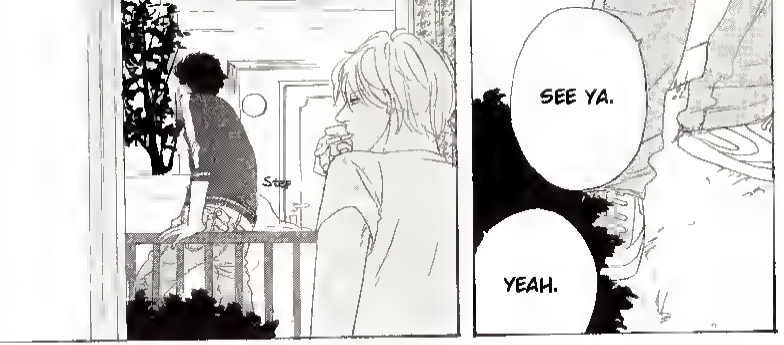
Touch Me Again
STORY 1
translator kurogane
typesetting kurogane

タッチ・ミー・アゲイン
TOUCH ME AGAIN 1
AFTER 10 YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP, THERE'S A BOND THERE THAT YOU CAN'T BREAK EVEN IF YOU WANTED TO
TOUDA,
FOOD'S HERE.

DON'T TURN OFF YOUR CELL.
I DIDN'T WANT TO TAKE ANY OF THOSE CALLS FROM MY EDITOR...
HEY.
SMACK
BUH!
yonk
WHAT...?
whish
...
slides
SORRY
IT'S ALWAYS ACTION FIRST WITH THIS GUY
EXPRESSION AND WORDS COME LATER
HMM?
Sigh
YOU ASS,
I TOLD YOU TO GET ME PRAWN CUTLET, NOT PORK.

BUT,
I GUESS I'M USED TO IT ALREADY.
RUSTLE
THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S PRETTY PERSISTENT ABOUT GETTING THE SHOOT DONE.
It's tough being a handyman.
I'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO THE STUDIO.
YEAH.
YOU DIDN'T BUY ANY FOR YOURSELF?
HMM?
IT JUST DOESN'T FEEL GOOD TO BE PUNCHED BY SOMEONE WHO'S EXPRESSIONLESS ALL THE TIME.
...I SEE,
THAT SUCKS.
STARTLE
WE HAD A DIFFERENT RELATIONSHIP ONCE.

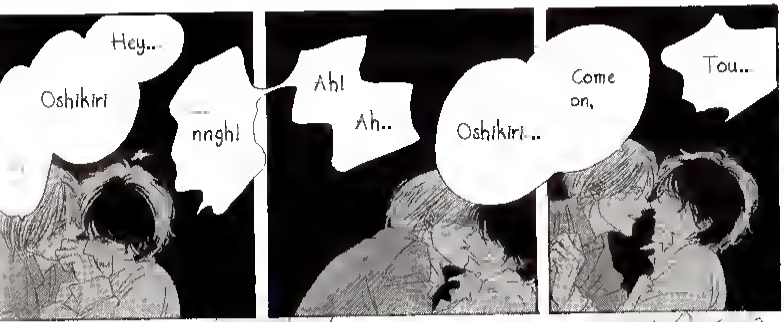

A LITTLE MORE THAN SEVEN YEARS AGO,
...
EYE-LASH.
FROM WHEN YOU RUBBED YOUR EYES, PROBABLY.
Smack
A KIND OF RELATION-SHIP THAT INVOLVED KISSING AND SEX
IT WAS LIKE A ONE NIGHT STAND
DO YOU WANT ME TO KILL YOU FOR REAL?
I thought you were going to bash my eyes in...
I was so scared
.....
Tou..
...da?




There was no exchange of "I love you".

And that incident soon became a secret of ours.

It was easy to pretend that nothing had happened.



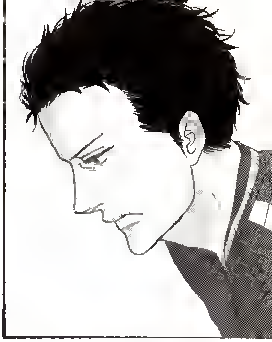

I must be going out of my mind.

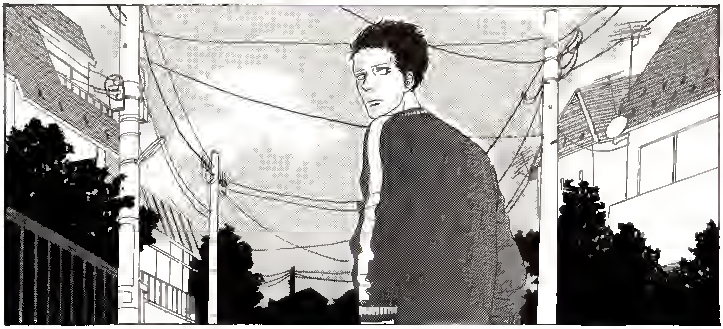
I think to myself "That's enough" a hundred times, and then there'd be a response at the back of my brain going "But still" a hundred and one times.

Right now, it's near impossible for us to be as honest about our feelings as we were back then.

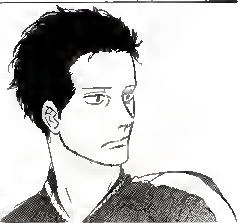
Sometimes I catch myself wondering why we weren't able to say it.

"Why is it that I'm the only one who keeps thinking about you" reverberates a hundred times in my head.

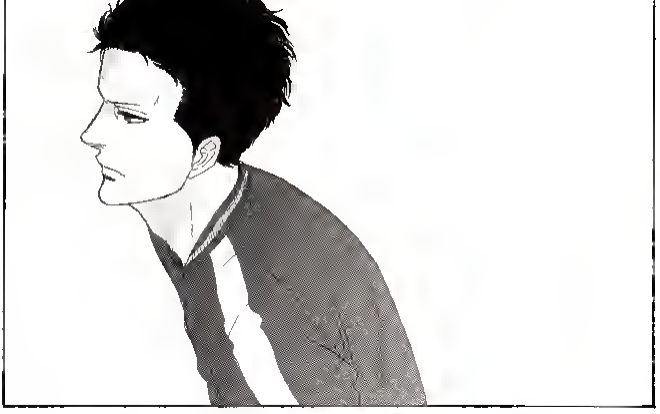




And then, "Perhaps you're thinking about me too" resounds a hundred and one times.



From that day seven years ago...



But somehow, sometime, I seem to have forgotten how they felt on me.

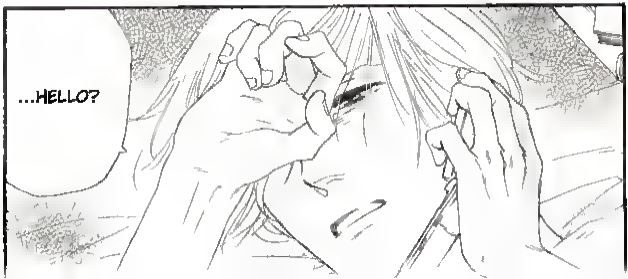
the way your fingers trembled slightly as they touched me.

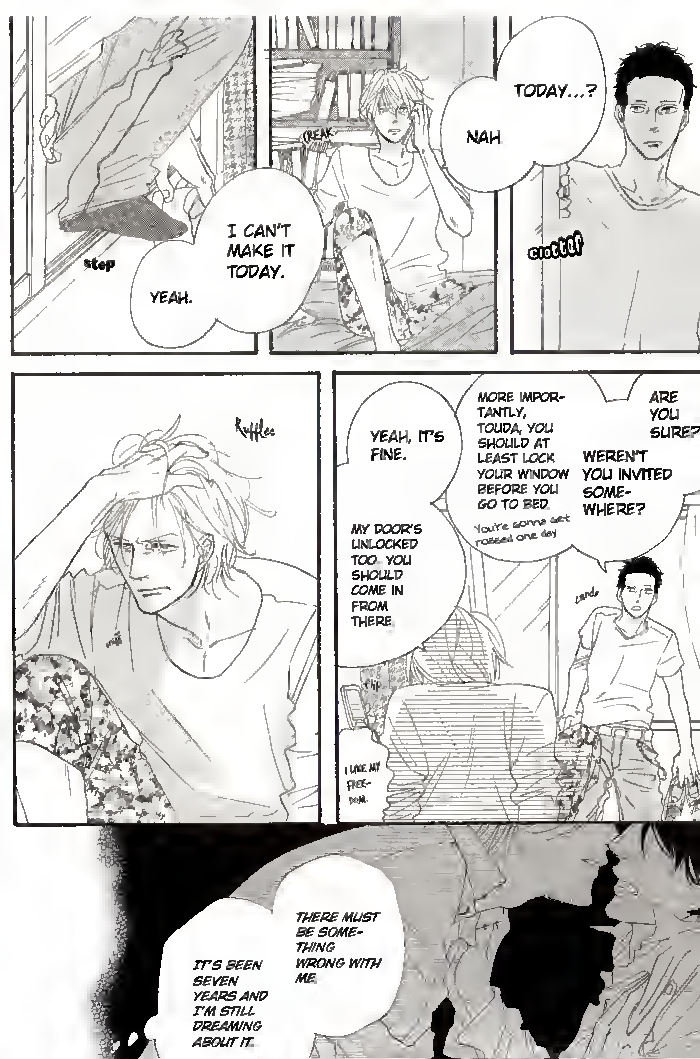
I thought I would always remember

# タッチ・ミー・アゲイン

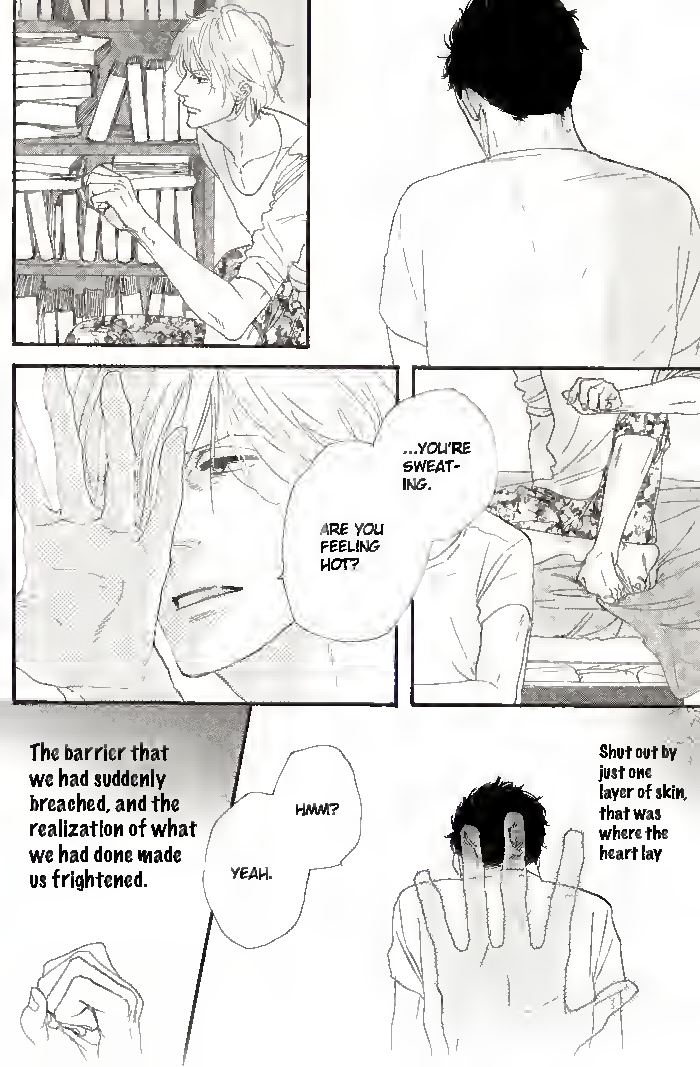
TOUCH ME AGAIN

— 2 —




step
I CAN'T MAKE IT TODAY.
YEAH.
CREAK
TODAY...?
NAH
creak
Rustle
YEAH, IT'S FINE.
MORE IMPORTANTLY, TOUDA, YOU SHOULD AT LEAST LOCK YOUR WINDOW BEFORE YOU GO TO BED.
You're gonna get raped one day
ARE YOU SURE?
WEREN'T YOU INVITED SOMEWHERE?
MY DOOR'S UNLOCKED TOO. YOU SHOULD COME IN FROM THERE.
I LOVE MY FREEDOM.
THERE MUST BE SOMETHING WRONG WITH ME.
IT'S BEEN SEVEN YEARS AND I'M STILL DREAMING ABOUT IT.

IT'S STRANGE.
YOU'RE VIOLENT AND YOU'RE ALWAYS TELLING LIES,
I'M AMAZED YOU'VE STILL GOT SO MANY FRIENDS--
WAH!
THAT'S BECAUSE I'M FRIENDLY, UNLIKE YOU,
SO THERE!
KICK
Seven years ago,
I touched him once.
That's it!
What the hell was that kick for?!
...Straight through to where his membrane was.
Right beneath that thin layer of skin...


ARE YOU FEELING HOT?
...YOU'RE SWEATING.
HMM?
YEAH.
The barrier that we had suddenly breached, and the realization of what we had done made us frightened.
Shut out by just one layer of skin, that was where the heart lay

In the end,
we let seven years pass us by,
all the while being aware that there was just that one impenetrable layer of skin preventing me from touching him.
I don't even have that much leisure to spend all my time thinking about you.
Doesn't it feel good to have me touch that membrane there like this?
See,
It's the same with your mouth.
UNH!
Touda,
Y-Your
finger!

Your lips are a membrane too.
This too.
O...
...OSHIKIRI,
WHAT DID YOU COME BY FOR TODAY?
...OH.
IT'S SUNDAY TODAY?
What?!
YES IT IS!
NOTHING IN PARTICULAR?
I JUST THOUGHT I'D DROP BY FOR A VISIT or something.
DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU MADE YOUR DATELINE ALREADY?
I'VE GOT THE DAY OFF TOO.

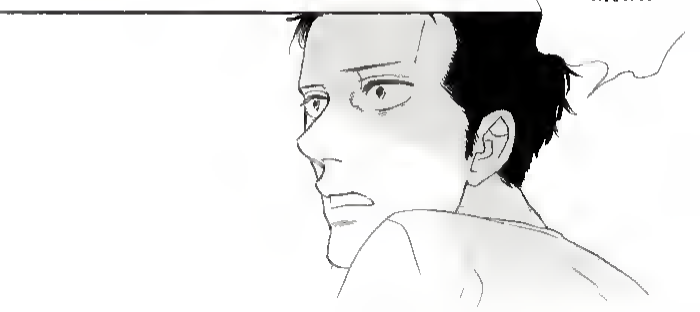
Seven years we spent under the veil of a tacit lie
This is precisely why I dislike you freelancers
"We're friends"
"Never again should we..."
HMM?
"Now that we've come this far."
HEY,
OSHIKIRI...
"we should've forgotten about it."
Flutter
DENK

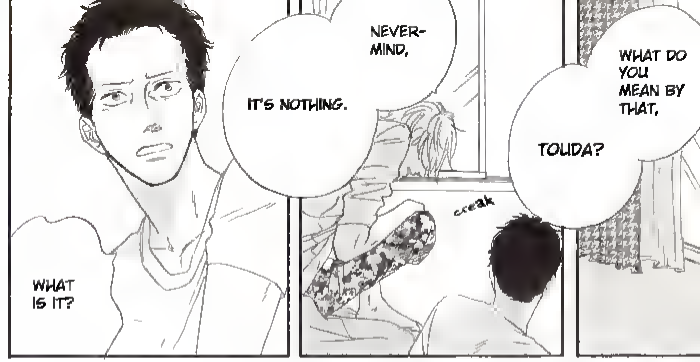
Below that 2 millimeter lie however, lay the truth.

"It's not love."

# タッチ・ミー・アゲイン

TOUCH ME-AGAIN —3—




WHAT IS IT?
IT'S NOTHING.
NEVER-MIND,
creak
TOUDA?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT,

...as friends
To just keep on staying by each other's side...
It's exhausting enough to keep this charade up;
Even then, those fingers that I felt on me were like a figment of my imagination.
Seven years ago, it happened just once
FORGET ABOUT IT.
CREAK
SLAM

I can't get you out of my mind, no matter how many women I bed or how many of them I fall in love with.
It's driving me mad.
W What...
Ever since that day seven years ago, I've been going weird in the head.
Tou..
da
Nngh!
At that time...
What did you just say?
Hmm?
I told you to try sticking out your tongue
...Nnh!

In the end, we had to hide under the farce of 'Nothing had happened' so we could continue being friends.

But this was not the case, and it was not a good idea to have ignored all that the way we did.

If either one of us had been female, those words wouldn't have been necessary.

I remember it as clear as day;

It's a lie when I say I've forgotten everything.

I remember it all.

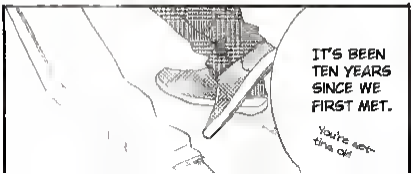
how your fingers, your gaze felt on me...

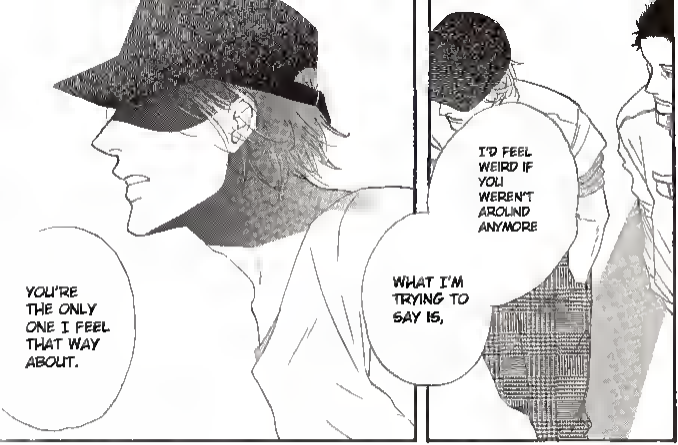
Seven years have passed since that day

And I can't seem to be able to shake free from that shadow casted over me

Am I going to have to fight this everyday?

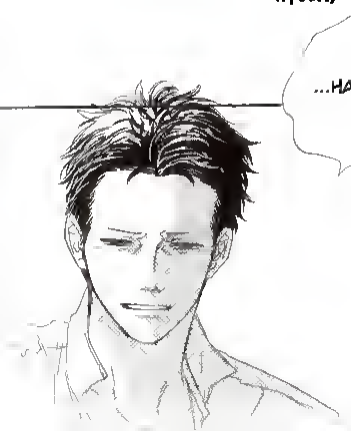
Even though you aren't that one true love for me?






I was trembling just like an idiot, as I thought to myself,

At that instant,




"This can't possibly be true love"

I would've made this that one true love for me.

If only you had,

If only you'd reached out to touch me once more...

STUDIO A
CREAK
IT'S BEEN FOUR WEEKS OF NO CONTACT.
IN ALL THE TEN YEARS WE'D SPENT TOGETHER, THIS WAS THE LONGEST AMOUNT OF TIME WE'VE EVER SPENT APART.
PHOTO STUDIO
0

EXCUSE ME,
DO YOU KNOW WHERE I CAN FIND OSHIKIRI?
THE ONLY TIME I HAD EVER TOUCHED OSHIKIRI'S BODY WAS SEVEN YEARS AGO
MY FRIEND'S BODY
steps in

# タッチ・ミー・アゲイン

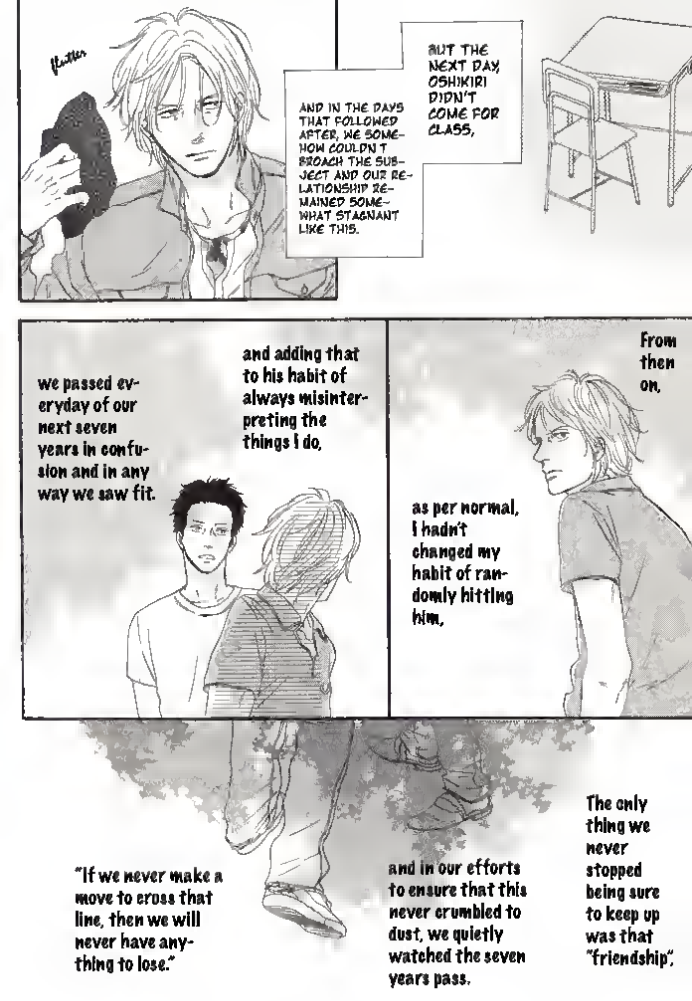
TOUCH ME AGAIN

— 4 —

TOUDA?

I WAS THINKING IT'S SCARY THAT YOU'RE BEING SO NICE ALL OF A SUDDEN--
PUNCH
OOF!
WOAH,
WHAT'S UP?
NOTHING MUCH.
I JUST THOUGHT YOU MUST BE REALLY BUSY SINCE YOU WEREN'T DROPPING BY MY PLACE AT ALL
SO I BROUGHT YOU SOME FOOD
Here
That really hurts.
Ouch.
Time to step out of it.
YOU IDIOT
MAKE SURE YOU COME OVER TODAY.
WHAT IS IT?
...
Take it
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT TIME.
WE'LL HAVE A MEAL TOGETHER, OKAY?

When I looked into Oshikiri's eyes today, I saw that the resignation there had grown stronger than usual.
SLAM
IS IT MY FAULT FOR ALWAYS KEEPING HIM AT A DISTANCE WITHOUT MAKING A MOVE?
CREAK
EVEN SO, IT WAS NEVER MY INTENTION TO FORGET EVERYTHING THAT TOOK PLACE THAT NIGHT.
Tou...
da.
Ah...
Ah!
...
how should I face him in school tomorrow?
...
...Ah.
Nn...
umph!


flutter
AND IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED AFTER, WE SOMEHOW COULDN'T BROACH THE SUBJECT AND OUR RELATIONSHIP REMAINED SOMEWHAT STAGNANT LIKE THIS.
BUT THE NEXT DAY, OSHIKIRI DIDN'T COME FOR CLASS,
we passed everyday of our next seven years in confusion and in any way we saw fit.
and adding that to his habit of always misinterpreting the things I do,
From then on,
as per normal, I hadn't changed my habit of randomly hitting him,
"If we never make a move to cross that line, then we will never have anything to lose."
and in our efforts to ensure that this never crumbled to dust, we quietly watched the seven years pass.
The only thing we never stopped being sure to keep up was that "friendship".

DOES THIS MEAN
MESSAGE TAKU NO 1
06/06/19 20:52
OSHIKIRI
NO TITLE
I THINK IT'S GOING TO BE LONG PAST 11 PM BEFORE I'M DONE, SO SORRY I'LL SEE YOU ANOTHER TIME!
REPLY
MENU
...DON'T ABANDON ME, OSHIKIRI...!
YOU'VE FINALLY DECIDED TO GIVE UP ON ME?

...
DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU COULDN'T COME?
CREAK

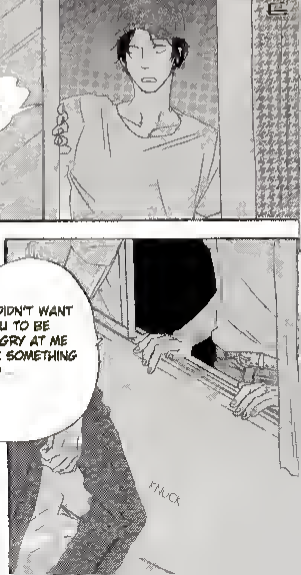
THUNK

WELL, IT'S ALREADY ONE IN THE MORNING AND I JUST GOT OFF WORK,
BUT YOU DIDN'T REPLY MY MESSAGE

BATTLE

AH

I did leave you a message after all!
Clack
AH!
YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED TO HIT ME THOUGH!

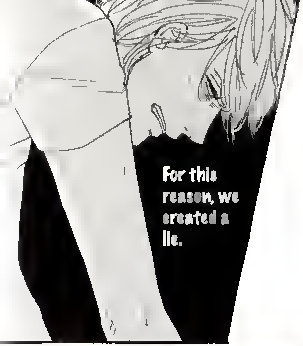

I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO BE ANGRY AT ME OR SOMETHING SO...
THUCK

WAH!
Wha—!
Thump!
PULLS
I KNOW,
OSHIKIRI,
GRABS
-NNGH!
Flutter
WHIP
OUCH!
-AH!
THUD
D-DIDN'T I TELL YOU NOT TO HIT ME—!
WHAT IS IT?!
I HAVE OTHER IDEAS.
rattle

LEANS IN
INSTEAD OF HITTING YOU,
I'M GOING TO DO SOMETHING MUCH WORSE TO YOU.
I KNOW THAT
YOU'RE STILL IN LOVE WITH ME.

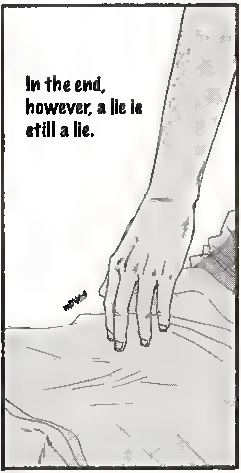
FOR SEVEN YEARS,
EVER SINCE THE DAY YOU TOUCHED ME,
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN IMAGINING
I WANT TO DO SOMETHING WORSE THAN HIT YOU,
タッチ・ミー・アゲイン
TOUCH ME AGAIN — 5 —
OSHIKIRI.
THE EXCHANGES OF "I LOVE YOU" AND "ME TOO" THAT I KNOW WILL NEVER COME. THESE WORDS KEEP REPEATING OVER AND OVER LIKE A BROKEN RECORD.
RIGHT FROM THE TIME WE DECIDED TO PRETEND NOTHING HAD HAPPENED BETWEEN US.
TOU...
DA?

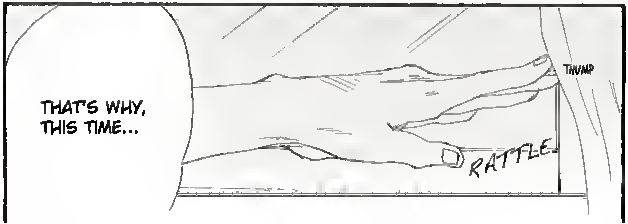
#tattle
IT'S OBVIOUS FROM YOUR RACING HEART THAT YOU KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT!
DON'T PLAY DUMB WITH ME!
THUMP
LUNA!!
TATTLE
WHAT ...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
BUT IF YOU START NOW--!
WEREN'T YOU ALWAYS LOOKING AT ME IN THAT HOPEFUL MANNER, WISHING I'D DO SOMETHING?!
WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO THEN?! WEREN'T YOU WAITING FOR ME?
S ..
Stop
STOP IT!
That convenient web of lies called "friendship" that we'd woven between us from that time seven years ago...
WOULDN'T WHAT WE'VE DONE SO FAR BE FOR NOTHING?!




but we wanted to make sure that at least for "tomorrow", we would still have each other.

We knew that it'd be impossible for us to be together forever in the future to come,

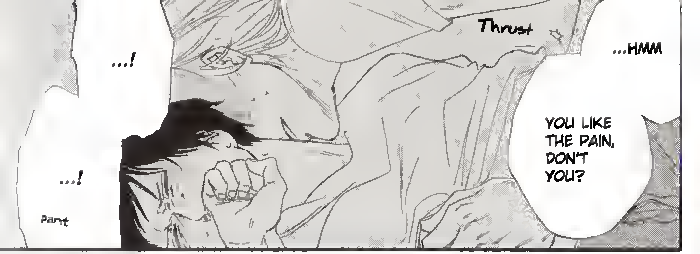


I kept wanting to ask you, wishing to know, waiting for you to tell me.

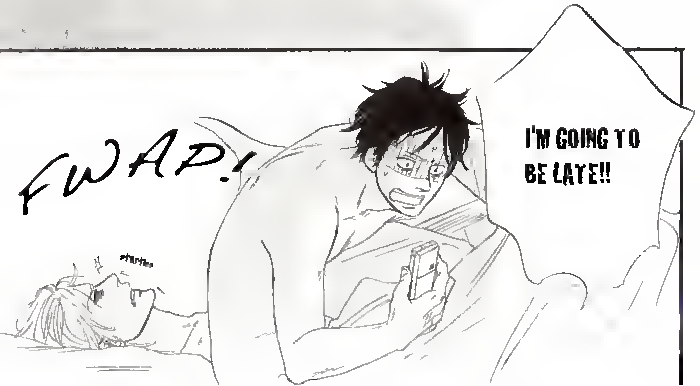
who are always so arrogant and so sure of yourself, why your hands trembled when they touched me.

Seven years ago, I couldn't help but wonder why you,




But somehow, my lips were trembling and I didn't find the courage to .

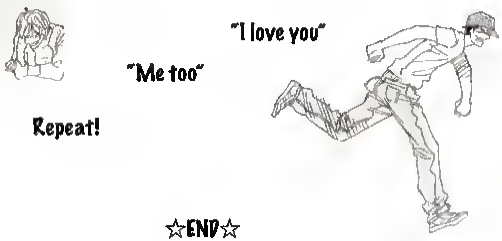
On that day, seven years ago, I really wanted to ask you why.



SHAKE
TIMP
TIMP
TIMP
COUGH
...?
YEAH, WHAT'S WRONG?
...
LEANS
...YOU'RE BEHAVING NORMALLY.
FINGLE
S L A M !
Wah!
WHAT IS IT?
...
I DON'T WANT ANYMORE BRUISES THOUGH.
Just look at this.
ALRIGHT!
COME OVER AGAIN TONIGHT,
I DON'T CARE WHAT TIME.

--!!
THAT'S!
not what I meant!
DO YOU PREFER IT ROUGH?
THAT'S!
NOT!
WEREN'T YOU GOING TO BE LATE?
Hurry up
...
Switch
I'LL BE GENTLER TO YOU TODAY,
I PROMISE.
WHY DON'T YOU LEARN HOW TO LOCK UP? DON'T SLEEP WITH YOUR WINDOW WIDE OPEN.
You idiot!
...
WHY DON'T YOU LEAVE BY THE FRONT DOOR?
STEP
RUSTLE

I ALWAYS LEAVE IT WIDE OPEN JUST SO THAT YOU CAN COME IN.
...AH, THAT'S A LIE THOUGH.
smirk
...!!
STOP LYING, YOU ASS!


"I love you"
"Me too"
Repeat!

☆END☆